

You win, I win by HoshisamaValmor

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Summary: Steve and Billy's score is a tie and that needs to be settled.
(AU Billy lives, can be read as platonic or otherwise)

You win, I win

Steve pushed all of Robin's unbelievably eloquent questions and follow-up answers (*"He beat the living hell out of you once, didn't he? Yes."*, *"I heard he was a general little shit even before shit hit all the vans, right? Yes."*, *"You car crashed him, you literally wrecked him up with the Todefather, right? Yeah, okay, we did, but you were the one driving."*, *"How many times did he get impaled by that monster? About ten? Yes."*, *"So how does all this sum up to you going to the hospital to pay him a visit?"*) to the back of his mind as he climbed up the steps to the upper floor of the hospital. His hand flew to his hair in reflex to reassure himself a bit; Max would be there. She didn't really leave Billy's side much now. Dustin had mentioned something about Lucas mentioning something about Max mentioning something about their dad - or Billy's dad, right, they were step-siblings. Whatever. - and Steve hadn't really got a full picture but enough to figure out the gent might not be the nicest guy around. So Max being there was a reassurance because... well, because Robin was right in everything she said (as usual...) and he had little reason to go visit Billy, other than the fact that the guy had gone through hell and managed to come back somehow.

Someone like that deserved some acknowledgement, by Steve's book. Even if it was Billy Hargrove.

Of course, that leap of logic wasn't one Steve really bothered to voice much as it felt rather obvious to him, but it really seemed most people weren't following it. Steve saw it splattered on both Max and Billy's faces when he knocked and opened the door of the bedroom.

"Steve?" Max said at once, standing up from her chair. "What're you doing here? What's wrong? Did something happen?"

"No, nothing happened. Don't worry." Steve pressed his lips together as he looked at both of them. Shit, Robin was right. "I, uh... I just wanted to visit you guys. See how you were holding up, Hargrove."

Billy looked like shit, actually, which was a new. But well, considering he was actually *alive*, he might be looking good, all things considered. At least he didn't have, like, tubes shoved down

his mouth all the way to his stomach or something, but he was positively very needle-pierced and tied up to a handful of machines and his face, arms and part of his chest that was visible from under the covers were all bandaged or band-aided in some way.

The explanation didn't really seem to do much to soften the look of surprise and exhaustion on Billy's face, but, in contrast, it had an effect on Max, whose concerned frown eased into a type of relief that made Steve want to readjust his hair again.

"Oh... thank you, Steve," she said, seeming genuinely touched rather than skeptical like Steve would've understand or expect of her. "That's... I'll just... Billy, I'm gonna go buy something off the vending machine, okay? I'll be right back."

Billy nodded at her. Max hurried towards Steve on the way to the door, mouthing the words 'thank you' again and although Steve nodded at her too, he wasn't really sure why she had done it. The door closed behind him, and Steve and Billy were left in mutual staring at each other.

The seconds dragged. Steve was starting to fear he'd hear an awkward cricket somewhere.

"Hey," he said, eventually. It counted for something.

"Hell're you doing here, Harrington?" Just as valid.

"Well, you seem fairly normal again," Steve breathed out, a nervous smile pulling the corner of his mouth. "It's been a week or something. I just thought I could pay you a visit, see how you were."

"Not dead yet."

"Yeah, I see that. Guess you're just that stubborn, huh."

"Guess so."

Well, wasn't that a fun conversation. Steve felt that nervous tug on his lips again and shifted the weight on his feet while Billy breathed out sharply and turned his face away.

"So, uh... you're holding up nicely."

"Could be dead, so I guess I'm actually good."

"Yeah, that's just what I... ahem..." Steve cleared his throat decisively. Neither of them was making this easy and less awkward, and it had no reason not to be. Billy had just beaten Steve once because he was in some mental dark place, and Steve shoved a car against his while he was possessed by an alien monster. Just normal stuff between guys. "We're tied."

Billy turned back to him.

"What?"

"I, uh... you and I have a score to settle. We're tied up. One for each."

"Settle what score?"

"Duh," Steve replied, but then he did remember that Billy had been considerably roughed up both physically and mentally and so he should probably be a little more considerate of his condition and at least contextualize his words. "Our score."

"What?" Billy repeated, frowning in confusion, so Steve tried again.

"You know, that time you beat me to an absolute pulp? Yeah, you're still a total douche for that, by the way, but I've won one now too, so we're tied and I think we have to solve that thing out."

"You didn't win shit."

"Yeah I did. Who do you think stopped you from running over everyone?"

The somewhat slowly relaxing look on Billy's face was fully gone in an instant and Steve immediately heard Robin's voice yelling in his head *'Real smooth, dingus!'* (and *great*, now the voice of his damn conscious was *Robin*? He was not going to tell her that) and his fingers twitched uncomfortably. Billy's gaze fell and he quickly moved his head toward the window again.

"Uh... sorry about that. Not the smoothest... ahem." Steve cleared his throat again and pushed a lock of hair to its correct place to gain the extra seconds. "Sorry about that. And uh... for your car, too. I kinda got that it's not really that salvagable."

"Yeah, I heard that too."

There was another moment of silence. Steve lowered his eyes before raising them again and locked them on Billy's face, which was still turned away.

"And... for everything else. You went through hell, man. You're... not the nicest guy around, but yeah, not even you deserved to go through that amount of shit. Everyone's glad you're alive, you know. And that seems to include me, too, so yeah, I'm glad you didn't leave me hanging without a rematch or something."

At least his special form of eloquency managed to pull a scoff out of Billy.

"Sure thing. I survived just to settle a score with you."

"Good thing you're a stubborn asshole," Steve said with a presumptuous grin, going back to question why he really was such a dingus and clearing his throat yet again. "So... get out of here fast, alright? We've been delaying that rematch for long enough and none of us is getting younger."

If that was Steve-fashion of 'get well soon' wishes, he should've expected Billy's own personal touch of a reply, and he didn't really disappoint.

"I'd beat your ass right now if you even tried, pretty boy."

Steve scoffed and rolled his eyes.

"Yeah, 'course you would. Who said the tiebreaker's gonna be a fist fight, anyway?"

Billy turned to him with a frown.

"What is it, then?"

"Oh, you'll figure it out soon enough."

He wasn't going to gloat and say that his encouragement words had helped Billy in his recovery (*'Oh, no, sure thing, dingus, he got better just because of your magical nonsensical bullshit'*), but surely the little mystery might have done its part, and a handful of weeks later, Steve and Billy were standing in the arcade with an entire set of cackling and screeching and yelling children that would call their names in turns.

"Steve, do something! Help me out! What do I need you for anyway if you don't distract my enemies?!"

"Just admit you're a loser, Dustin, seriously. Billy, can you get us some nourishment, please?"

"Nourishment?"

"Victory drinks, El. We need to get our hydration levels up again, because we're just too hot today."

"Ha ha ha ha, that was so much sass, Max."

"It's classy."

"Stop defending her, Lucas!"

"I'm not!"

"Come on, let me play now."

"No, Will! I have to beat her."

"You obviously can't, so let me-"

"You're both traitors, I tell you! Steve! Help me!"

"I need to get ready for round 10, Billy."

"Steve! !"

Steve turned to Billy, who was in that sweet crossroad between irritation, amusement and utter desperation to the scenario displayed before him.

"Babysitting," Steve said with an ominous tone. "I have four teenage boys."

"I have two teenage girls," Billy replied absentmindedly.

Steve narrowed his eyes, picking up the trump card on his sleeve.

"I have Erica *and* Robin."

Billy scoffed, but the reluctant smirk was definitely up the road of amusement and not the other two.

"Well, I wouldn't want to be you."

"I win."

"No, you don't. Max and El are more of a handful than four dumb kids."

"I have two girls too, *and* the four boys!"

"You don't babysit Erica and Robin, they babysit you."

"What?! Come on..."

"Our handfuls are even. You win, I win."

"But then we're still tied."

Billy scoffed again and shrugged.

"We'll have to find another way to settle it, then."

Steve didn't really have any other ideas now - and he firmly believed he won on the babysitting category - but there were more pressing, vocal matters at hand.

"You've got this, Max!"

"Steve, do something! !"

"Billy, don't let him! Beat his ass if he even tries anything!"

"STEVE ! ! !"

.

the end

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Author's Note: I wanted Steve and Billy to settle their score because they were left in a tie. Since that's not ever gonna happen now, I wrote it.

Disclaimer at the end but I obviously don't own Stranger Things.

Thanks for reading, feedback is appreciated.